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THE BONE-SETTER'S MYSTERY.

How an uninstructed class of men, known as 'bone-setters,' should possess the knack of curing ailments which baffle the surgical profession, lately formed the subject of an article in these pages (November 9, 1878). We there suggested that instead of denying the validity of these cures, the medical faculty should fairly investigate the methods which these bone-setters pursue. It was our conviction that there was a mystery to be solved. The world wanted to get at the truth, and would not be put off with jeers in a matter so intimately involving the assuagement of human suffering.

When making these remarks, we were not aware that a regular practitioner in surgery had actually investigated the bone-setter's mystery, and written a book on the subject: 'On Bone-setting, so called, by Wharton P. Hood, M.D., M.R.C.S. (Macmillan, 1871).' This book has fallen under our notice; and it so clearly expounds the mystery, that we wonder how members of the medical profession should still have any doubts on the question. For general information, we shall present an analysis of Dr Hood's explanations on this very curious topic.

Through the effects of accident, painful injuries occur to shoulder, elbow, knee, and other joints. The parts usually swell and stiffen, and surgical aid is properly called in. Unfortunately, the surgeons are sometimes unable to effect a cure. When such is the result, a bone-setter, as a last resource, is invited to operate. In every instance, the bone-setter declares that the joint is 'out,' or dislocated. In thus offering his opinion he has no intention to deceive. He believes what he says. Often, the joint has an appearance of being dislocated, and as the operator acknowledges his ignorance of anatomy, he may naturally enough commit a mistake in his diagnosis. Impressed with this notion, he by a smart jerk and wrench, a kind of *coup de main*, instantly sets the unfortunate joint to rights. Now this is decidedly clever. It matters little that he erred in imagining that the joint was out.

He has cured the ailment that had baffled three or four surgeons in succession, and that surely should be mentioned with something like respect. The mystery of the cure lies in the rapidity of its execution. Yet, though rapid, there must be a particular manœuvre with the fingers. This will be understood from Dr Hood's account of two or three cases. He speaks of Mr Hutton, the now deceased bone-setter in London.

Mr A—, a gentleman, happened to twist his left knee, by which he endured great pain. He underwent medical treatment without effect, and sought the advice of Mr Hutton. He, however, changed his mind, and again went on with his medical attendants. Not recovering, he at length resolved to let Mr Hutton operate upon him. Hutton came. Dr Hood, who at the same time attended, says: 'We found the knee-joint enveloped in strapping; and when this was removed, the joint was seen to be much swollen, the skin shining and discoloured. The joint was immovable, and very painful on the inner side. Mr Hutton at once placed his thumb on a point over the lower edge of the inner condyle of the femur, and the patient shrank from the pressure and complained of great pain. He (Mr Hutton) made no further examination of the limb, but said: "What did I tell you two years ago?" Mr A— replied: "You said my knee was out." "And I tell you so now," was the rejoinder. "Can you put it in?" said Mr A—. "I can." "Then be good enough to do so," said Mr A—, holding out his limb. Mr Hutton, however, declined to operate for a week; ordered the joint to be enveloped in linseed poultices and rubbed with neat's-foot oil, made an appointment, and took his leave. During the dialogue I had carefully examined the limb, had satisfied myself that there was no dislocation, and had arrived at the conclusion that rest, and not movement, was the treatment required. At the expiration of the week I went again to the house, and Mr Hutton arrived shortly afterwards. "How's the knee?" was his inquiry. "It feels easier." "Been able to move it?" "No." "Give it to me." The leg was stretched out, and Mr

Hutton stood in front of the patient, who hesitated, and lowered his limb. "You are quite sure it is out, and you can put it right?" There was a pause, and then: "Give me your leg, I say." The patient obeyed reluctantly, and slowly raised it to within Mr Hutton's reach. He grasped it with both hands, round the calf, with the extended thumb of the left hand pressing on the painful spot on the inner side of the knee, and held the foot firmly by grasping the heel between his own knees. The patient was told to sit steadily in his chair, and at that moment I think he would have given a good deal to have regained control over his limb. Mr Hutton inclined his knees towards his right, thus aiding in the movement of rotation which he impressed upon the leg with his hands. He maintained firm pressure with his thumb on the painful spot, and suddenly flexed the knee. The patient cried out with pain. Mr Hutton lowered the limb, and told him to stand up. He did so, and at once declared he could move the leg better, and that the previously painful spot was free from pain. He was ordered to take gentle daily exercise, and his recovery was rapid and complete. In a few days he returned to business, and from that time until his death, which occurred three years afterwards, his knee remained perfectly well.

Another case was that of the Honourable Spencer Ponsonby, who is suffered to tell his own story. 'On November 26, 1864, in running across the garden at Croxteth, near Liverpool, I felt and heard something crack in the calf of my left leg. It was so painful that I rolled over like a shot rabbit, and could scarcely reach the house, a few yards off. I at once put my leg up to the knee in a pail of hot water, and boiled it for an hour. Next day, being no better, I sent for a medical man in the neighbourhood, who told me I had snapped a muscle, and must keep quiet for a few days. He rubbed in a strong liniment, there being no sign of inflammation; and put on a strong leather plaster. In a couple of days I was able to hobble; but being telegraphed to London, and going into an empty house, I knocked my toe against a tack in the floor, and hurt myself worse than ever. From this time (December 2) to the beginning of May, I was attended by Mr A—— and Mr B—— in consultation, who agreed in saying that the "stocking of the calf was split" (gastrocnemius, I think they called it), and treated me accordingly. Occasionally my leg got better; but the slightest exertion produced pain and weakness.

'On the 2d of May, Mr C—— undertook me. He agreed as to the injury, but thought that, constitutionally, I was out of order, and gave me some iron, &c. without effect. My leg was also fixed in an iron machine to relieve the muscles of the calf from the weight of the leg. Another eminent surgeon came in consultation on June 26. He agreed in Mr C——'s treatment, and in the cause of the lameness; as did Dr D——, who was consulted as to my going to Wildbad.

'August 14.—As I did not improve, Mr C—— put my leg into a gum-plaster for a month. I then went yachting, so as to obtain perfect repose for that time. My health, which had been getting bad, was improved by the sea-air, but my leg was no better. The surgeon on board the yacht, Dr E——, also examined me, and agreed as to

the cause of the lameness, but said: "An old woman may cure you, but no doctor will."

'On September 7 the gum-plaster was removed, and galvanism was then tried for about three weeks. At the end of this time I went on a yacht voyage for four months, and, during the whole of this period had sea-water douches. All this time I had been either on crutches or two sticks. My health was much improved by the sea-voyage, but my leg was the same as before, and had shrunk to about half its proper size.

'April 5.—Mr F—— began his system to cure my leg. His idea was, that the muscles were separated, but that if brought together continuously, they would rejoin. I wore a high-heeled boot during the day, and during the night my heel was fixed so that it was kept in the same position. No good arose from this treatment; and consequently, after a month's trial, I went to Mr Hutton, who, on seeing my high heel, said: "What do you wear that machine for? Do you want to lame yourself?" I was proceeding to tell him the opinion of the various surgeons on my case, when he said: "Don't bother me about anatomy; I know nothing about it: but I tell you your ankle is out, and that I can put it in again."

'After a few weeks, during which he had been to the North, and could not therefore undertake my case, I returned to him on June 27, telling him that I had in the meantime consulted surgeons who had assured me that, whatever else might ail me, my ankle was most assuredly "all right," but that I would notwithstanding submit to his treatment. He again examined me most carefully, beginning at the ankle round bone, and he then put his thumb on to a place which hurt me a good deal, and produced a sensation of a sharp prick of a pin. He proceeded to operate upon me, and after a time there was a distinct report, and from that moment the pain was gone. Mr Hutton desired me to walk moderately, but to take no violent exercise for a long time, and to use a good deal of cold water. From that moment my leg gradually got better. I was able to walk out shooting quietly in September, and on the 14th October, having missed a train, walked home fifteen miles along the high-road. In the following year I resumed cricket, tennis, and other strong exercise, and have continued them ever since.

We present one more case. In 1859, a gentleman sustained an injury in his knee by leaping from a wall. The surgeons whom he consulted ordered blistering, bandaging, and the use of crutches in order to rest the limb. He was six years in their hands, and continued as bad as ever. In 1865, he consulted Mr Hutton. He asked what was the matter. "I told him I was lame. "Are these your sticks?" pointing to the crutches. "Yes." "Well, let me look at your leg." He then instantly placed his thumb on the tender spot inside the knee, causing me great pain. I said: "Yes; that is the place, and no other." "Ah," he replied, "I thought so. That will do. How long have you been lame?" "Six years." "What treatment have you had?" I told him; and also that I was advised that my lameness resulted from constitutional causes. He said: "Bah! If you had not had a pretty good constitution, they would have killed you." I told him that I had

seen Mr D—. "Well," he said, "you might as well have seen my cook. He can't cure that knee." I asked him what he thought was the matter with it. He said: "That knee is out; I'll stake my reputation on it, and I can cure it." I was ordered to apply linseed-meal poultices for a week, and then go to him again, which I did, and happily with the best results. I have never needed the use of crutches since; and although it was some time before I gained much strength in the legs, I am now able to walk as well as before the injury.'

Frequently the cause of pain and immobility in the joint is not dislocation, but an injury to ligaments, which become contracted, with an attendant stiffening and swelling. 'On careful examination, some spot will be found, often very limited in extent, at which pain is produced by pressure, and it will be from this spot that the pain movement radiates.' The knack of the bone-setter consists in rupturing the contracted ligaments, or it may be inflammatory adhesions, by dexterous manipulation, and so producing flexion in the joint. The operation is not without hazard, for inconsiderate and rough treatment might have disastrous consequences. It is likely enough, that the reason why surgeons fail to cure the ailment is a not unreasonable apprehension of doing more harm than good by using physical force. 'Perhaps,' says Dr Hood, 'the most noteworthy feature of bone-setting is the ingenuity with which the leverage of the limbs themselves is rendered available for the purpose of obtaining the power necessary for the accomplishment of the object, so as to dispense entirely with mechanical appliances. . . It is also noteworthy that little or no use is made of extension. Mr Hutton used to say: "Pulling is of little use; the twist is the thing." And I have no doubt that this method of evading muscular resistance might be made very extensively useful.'

If, on rectifying an injured joint, a crack was emitted, Hutton used to say that it was the sound caused by the head of the bone slipping into the socket. It might be so in real cases of dislocation; but for the most part, the crack only signified the snapping of the ligaments which had held the limb in restraint. The strong pressure with the thumb on the seat of pain, the firm grasp of the hands, the sudden and dexterous twist! In these few words, along with natural shrewdness and experience, the mystery of the bone-setter seems to be revealed. We have not gone into a tenth part of the explanations offered on this interesting subject. The book should be perused by those young practitioners who are immediately concerned. To illustrate his definitions, Dr Hood gives a number of drawings of the various methods of rectifying injured joints. Small as it is, his work, we should think, will form a useful addition to the surgical library; nor is it without value to general readers. At all events, a service has been done in clearing up *The Bone-setter's Mystery*.

P.S.—We have received a number of letters from medical practitioners on this subject to which we cannot reply separately. It will be obvious from the above, that we entertain no prejudice in favour of bone-setters, and have no wish to disparage the surgical faculty; to which, in its now advanced stages, the world owes so much. What we have insisted on from the first, is that the

bone-setter's mystery, knack, or whatever it may be called, should be honestly unravelled, instead of being indiscreetly and contemptuously thrust aside, as some of our correspondents were disposed to do. Now that the subject has been scientifically looked into, any discussion regarding it may be allowed to drop. W. C.

YOUNG LORD PENRITH.

CHAPTER X.—AT MIDNIGHT.

THE steamer *Western Maid*, belonging to the Tug and Salvage Company, was on her homeward trip to Treport, her natural home and harbour. It had been black night long before she could leave St Mary's Bay, and even now she had a leash of smacks in tow, each laden gunwale deep with shining oily fish, destined one day to be the solid *pièce de résistance* at many a frugal meal in Spain or Portugal. These pilchards were to be cured and barrelled at Treport, not at St Mary's, and therefore the skippers were willing to pay for the coals that had to supplement the coy Atlantic breeze. Long Michael the mate, very tired, more fatigued indeed than he cared to own, had turned in below, and was sleeping the sound sleep that attends honest toil. His young Captain had insisted on taking upon himself the night-watch, as they ran slowly up the coast back to harbour.

Hugh Ashton, a poor fisherman and letter-out of pleasure-boats in a Welsh lake-side village but a few weeks since, to-day commander of a pretty coasting-craft, walked the deck with the assured step of one who had trodden ship's planks many a time beneath quite other constellations than those pale homely stars that twinkled above him in the familiar English sky. There was the Bear, and there was Charles's Wain, there Orion's Belt, and there the Pole Star; but where was Canopus, one blaze of yellow flame, and where the Southern Cross, that lent hope to the first discoverers of island-continents hidden amidst the unploughed waters of the far Pacific?

Hugh paced slowly to and fro. There was a good steersman at the helm. The look-out ahead was briskly kept. The proper lights were burning bright. At intervals—for there was a vapour that hung hazily, half-fog, half-shade, over the sea—the steam-whistle sounded. Small risk of a collision either with smacks working home to Treport or with ships bound up Channel, on so calm a night and with such precautions; yet Hugh kept his eyes open, and scanned sea and sky in his walk, as a seaman should.

By-and-by there arose, like a lover's sigh, a breath of western wind, and it lifted the fog-curtain in a moment, like some decoration of a theatre, and left the pale dark sea with its thousand ripples and wrinkles clearly visible. Not a craft was to be seen save the three in tow astern of the *Western Maid*. As yet, Treport lights were not to be descried. There was the Head to round first; and on the Head burned, as usual, the revolving red light that shewed the mariner where he was, and had saved many a life and much cargo, and many a stout ship from being ground to powder among Cornish rocks.

Hugh Ashton, walking the deck of his own ship for the first time, might have been pardoned had his air and step indicated some elation due to his sudden rise in life. He had, partly through the

caprice of a rich old woman, partly through his own merits, abruptly mounted several rungs of that great ladder up which we are all supposed, with less or more of alacrity, to climb and push and jostle and worm our way. It is no mighty authority or lofty station which the command of a tug-steamer confers; but still the appointment to such a post was high promotion to a poor toiler for daily bread. Yet the young man's dark, handsome face was thoughtful, and even stern, as he paced to and fro, never so deeply absorbed in his reverie as to forget the vigilance that befitted his position.

Steady and gentle was the *Western Maid's* progress towards Treport, the still sea growing lambent with phosphorescent light, that glowed mysteriously in watery depths, or sparkled into flashes as the surface rippled at the touch of the breeze. Often had Hugh Ashton marked that living light on a grander scale than this, in the far-off Indian Ocean, or on the glassy spread of the Pacific, where the tiny creatures, glow-worms of ocean, that yield it, swarm in millions beyond the dream of an arithmetician; but never had it so impressed him as on that night, his first experience of his novel position of responsibility and trust. He glanced upwards, and his lips moved, in prayer we well may deem; and then, with the same steady tread and air of quiet watchfulness, he resumed his solitary walk.

Presently Hugh Ashton halted beside the binnacle, and drawing from an inner pocket of the coat he wore a thin packet, proceeded to undo the wrapper and examine the contents. There were five or six letters, old, all of them, since the paper was slightly yellowed and the ink faded. There was also a little diary or memorandum book, most of the pages of which were covered with a fine close handwriting. It was evident from the manner in which the young man glanced his eyes over these that the purport of the documents was sufficiently familiar to him, and that he only consulted them now with the object of refreshing his memory as to minor details. It was with a heavy sigh that he closed the book and, carefully folding the letters, replaced the packet within its wrapping of stout paper.

'A sacred duty!' murmured Hugh, as he thrust the little parcel back into its former place of concealment. 'Not lightly undertaken, not easy to perform; but I will never flinch from it, or be false to it, so Heaven help me at my utmost need! It was beside his grave at Bala that I made my vow, that my resolve shaped itself into a fixed and steady purpose. Poor father! A gentler, purer soul never yet left this earth than his, who bore through half a lifetime uncomplaining what it fires my blood to think of! He shall be righted yet. His innocence, his good name, and fair fame shall be established, or I will live and die—as I am!'

'Treport lights, Captain!' said the man at the helm gruffly, as they rounded the Head and came in sight of the town. And Hugh stepped aft, and chatted for a while good-naturedly with the steersman, until Long Michael, rubbing his eyes, came drowsily on deck.

'You *would* have me turn in, Cap,' said the mate bashfully, and then added: 'You're as bright as a beagle, without even forty winks, skipper!'

Hugh laughed. 'I learned to do without

sleep,' he said cheerily, 'unless convenient, when I was among the head-hunting Dyaks of Borneo. But if I'd had your work yesterday, mate—we may call it yesterday now—I should have been drowsy enough. You slaved, Michael, to make my first day's labour seem like a holiday.'

Long Michael, permanent mate, as it seemed, of the good steam-ship *Western Maid*, reddened and chuckled as he took his young commander's offered hand, and wrung it in a grasp that would have crushed and galled some joints and fingers sorely. 'I'm glad, Cap., if I've eased it off a bit!' was all the worthy fellow said; and then he bestirred himself, that the entering Treport quayside should be as prosperous as the outward cruise had been. It was late, or rather early—since the church clock had struck two while he was traversing the ill-paved streets—when Hugh Ashton reached his lodgings. He had no latch-key. Houses such as Captain Trawl's pretty white cottage, in counties so remote as that of Cornwall, are seldom provided with latch-keys for the accommodation of bachelor indwellers.

'Nezer, the dwarf factotum who, with a raw-boned elderly woman from the town or village of Treport, did the roughest of the work, opened the door when Hugh knocked, and Neptune bounced and barked a complimentary reception.

'He's larned to like ye a'ready, Nep has!' grumbled the dwarf, half grudgingly. 'The dog don't take to some and all, Master Ashton, I can tell 'ee, on so short an acquaintance, he don't.'

To Hugh's dismay, he found his host the superannuated captain and his grandchild sitting up for him, and supper prepared.

'We heard,' said the veteran, 'as how it had been a good catch; and a good catch is a blessing from Heaven to us poor coast-folk here. It's not for myself that I speak. I've enough, thanks to God, for the evening of my old life, and to leave Rose here comfortable when I am asleep in Treport churchyard. But I feel as if I couldn't rest in my bed when fishermen's little ones are fractious and pining for want of a meal. All's right now; and so, Captain, tell us all about it.'

It was late before the old man would allow his guest to retire for what was left of the night. Hugh said, modestly but with perfect truth, that his own part in the business of the day had been scarcely more than that of a spectator. And he praised Long Michael warmly as the real discharger of the duties of commander of the *Western Maid*. But his audience did not appear to be easily kindled to enthusiasm on the subject of the steamer's mate.

'Ay, ay!' Captain Trawl would say, in answer to Hugh's hearty encomiums. 'A good seaman and an honest lad is that Long Michael of ours.'

But that was all. And pretty Rose smiled pityingly as she spoke of poor Michael's trick of blushing, and of his huge hands and clumsy feet. Presently the conversation drifted away from Cornwall and pilchards to wild people and tropic scenery at the other side of the world; and the two Captains, old and young, compared their reminiscences, Captain Trawl as charmed to have found a good listener in Hugh, as ever was Scott's Antiquary with his phoenix Mr Lovel; while Rose hearkened, breathlessly attentive, to the few short anecdotes of adventure that their young guest related.

Hugh Ashton, when at length he fell asleep in his neat little room up-stairs, with the scent of flowers in the garden below stealing up to his lattice through the still autumnal air, dreamed of a female form, that floated, vaporous and indistinct, over the murmuring sea. Sometimes the shadowy presence wore the features of Maud Stanhope; and anon Maud's beautiful face would fade away, and be replaced by the wistful blue eyes and golden hair of Rose Trawl. And then he was in a church, where a bridal company had gathered. He—Hugh—was the bridegroom; but the veiled bride, who stood with her face averted, who was she? Just as he sought to clasp her hand in his, a wild ghastly form, draped in the ceremonies of the grave, rose shrieking, to forbid the blessing to be spoken; and Hugh awoke, to find the early light of day streaming into the room. It was morning, and he had other things to do than to dwell upon the phantasies of the night. On that day he was free to go up to Llosthuel Court, and pay his respects to Lady Larpent.

CHAPTER XI.—YOUR FORTUNE.

It is a steep though winding road which leads up from Treport, low-lying, as a harbour must perforce be, to the bold heights on which Llosthuel Court is perched. And the latter occupies, as regards the former, at once an ostensibly commanding and a protecting position, dear to the appreciative mind of the Dowager who dwelt there. It is very improbable that the Penhuels, when they chose that site for their abode, thought very much of scenery or effect. The picturesque had not as yet been invented, and people planted their dwellings where they were snug or safe, without much thought for anything but warmth or convenience. It was enough in those days that Llosthuel was out of reach of the pirates, Moslem or Christian, who sometimes made a dash at the exposed coast of Cornwall, even so late as Charles I.'s reign, and that it lay adjacent to the cream of the property, farm and mine, on the high tableland that towered majestically aloft.

Up this winding road, Hugh Ashton, walking briskly, but pausing now and then to drink with his eyes the beauty, new to him, of the landscape that lay within his range of vision, made his way. The road led past steep meadows, where the active little Cornish cows had to display mountaineering qualities as they browsed; past barren banks, amidst the stones of which a querulous goat occasionally tugged at the rope that tethered it; and then among rocks, mingling their gray scalps with the dark green of fir plantations. As he turned a rocky corner, the sound of two voices, apparently in altercation, fell upon his ear; one, which was raised in remonstrance, being sweet and soft, and emphatically that of a lady; while the other, harsh and petulant, could scarcely be recognised as feminine.

'Let me pass you, please. I told you at first that I had no money with me. If you will come up to the house'—said the first voice.

'If I will come up to the house!' vehemently interrupted the other speaker. 'You will sing another song, then, sweet one, when there are men and maids to hasten to your call. Then it will be: "To jail with the Bess o' Bedlam! Away with her, the gipsy thief and threatener—the

cheat and cozenor, that knows the inside of nigh every prison from Caithness to Cornwall!" No, no; I'm too gray and too old a weasel to be caught napping.—What's that you say?' she added in a sort of shriek. 'Alms, charity! Yes, a grudging sixpence, and a basin of the thin soup that is good enough for the poor. No, no; I ask none such! Let the poor gipsy tell your fortune, pretty lady,' continued the woman, with a sudden resumption of the fawning tone peculiar to itinerant soothsayers of the class to which she presumably belonged. 'Let me read your hand, as now I read your face, and tell you what the stars have in store for you; and as for payment, if you cannot cross my palm with silver, gold will do as well; that brooch, or those rings in your dainty ears, or'—

At this moment Hugh stepped forward, and came in sight of Maud Stanhope, evidently much alarmed, standing face to face with a wild-eyed, gaunt-faced woman, tall, grim, and menacing of aspect, whose ragged gray hair hung down from beneath a battered bonnet, and whose travel-stained and squalid garments were in part concealed by the yellow shawl, threadbare, but once no doubt of costly make, that was wrapped around her. The woman turned round at the sound of a man's footstep, and snarled at Hugh like a wild-cat balked of its prey.

'O Mr Ashton, I have been so frightened, perhaps foolishly!' exclaimed Maud, trying to smile, as she stepped forward.

Her tormentress stretched forth a bony hand, as if to bar the way. 'I'll have the yellow gold!' she hissed out.

'This is some poor crazy creature,' said Hugh, advancing. 'In any case,' he added, 'you must not annoy ladies, mother, please.—I will see you safely, Miss Stanhope, to the house.' The gipsy, if such she was, as her swarthy complexion might have implied, recoiled with a scream of terror as Hugh drew near.

'Mr George!' she exclaimed, with a frenzied look of alarm, and stretching out her skinny hands, as if to shut out some horrid sight.—'Mr George!' And in an instant she was gone, striking into a side-path among trees and rocks, which for pedestrians afforded a shorter cut to Treport than did the winding carriage-road. Scarcely had the echo of her steps died away, before Sir Lucius Larpent, on horseback, and looking very indolent and handsome, came in sight, riding with a loose rein, and seeming with his half-shut eyes and lounging air, as if he were only as yet half-awake. He opened his eyes widely enough, however, and with a displeased glance as he saw who was Maud's companion.

'Why, cousin,' he said, dismounting, with an affected little laugh, 'this is an unexpected pleasure.—Ah! Mr—Yes—Ashton, good-morning to you.' And he favoured Hugh with a nod, which the young commander of the *Western Maid* returned by a bow of coldest civility. Now in point of fact Sir Lucius was not quite veracious in his late speech. He had expected to meet Maud, and on her account had given himself the trouble to be thus early abroad. But he had not expected to find Miss Stanhope in company with Hugh Ashton; for whom he had, even in Wales, conceived a profound dislike. His looks so clearly expressed his annoyance and surprise, that Maud,

although she owed her kinsman no sort of duty or obedience, was eager to explain what had occurred. Sir Lucius listened to her narrative with a frigid politeness that was almost impertinent.

'So that the beggar-woman frightened you, and you did not know how to get rid of her importunities; and this Mr Ashton came up in the very nick of time and drove her away. I envy his luck in turning up, as he always seems to do, in the character of a rescuer of young ladies.'

This was sneeringly spoken, and the words were in themselves flippant and contemptuous. Hugh Ashton's sunburnt cheek flushed crimson; but he had great self-control, as a brave man usually has, and his voice was calm as he made answer: 'I am glad, Sir Lucius, that I did "turn up" to-day, when I did. It is not that I believe Miss Stanhope to have been in serious danger.'

'There! that is candid at least,' interrupted the baronet with a jeering laugh. 'Your hero, Maud, you see, admits there was no danger but in your own imagination. I suppose you thought your life itself in peril from the claws and teeth of the devouring dragon from whom he saved you!'

'But,' pursued Hugh with forced composure, 'I believe that, had no one arrived, Miss Stanhope would have been robbed of her ornaments, and might have sustained some hurt, too, at the hands of the madwoman who had waylaid her.'

'Yes; I'm sure it is so!' exclaimed Maud with some warmth. 'And you are ungrateful and unkind, Cousin Lucius, not to thank Captain Ashton, as I do, I am sure; and as Aunt Larpent will, for the service he has rendered me.'

The mention of his imperious mother seldom failed to exercise a sobering effect over the evil temper of the baronet. 'I do thank Mr—well, Captain Ashton if you choose, for his opportunity arrival,' he said smoothly. 'And I apologise, if I seemed to speak lightly at first, of your fright or of his assistance. You are agitated still, Maud, and would be better indoors. I will walk with you,' he added, passing his horse's bridle over his left arm; 'and we need not detain Captain Ashton, any longer.' And if a look could have dismissed Hugh, Sir Lucius would have been left alone to escort his beautiful cousin to the house. But Hugh did not choose thus to accept his dismissal.

'I was on my road to the Court,' he said, 'by Lady Larpent's desire, and my own wish. And in any case I mean to see Miss Stanhope safe home.'

Therefore Maud Stanhope returned up the winding road under the guardianship of both these young men, one of whom was inwardly anathematising the presumption of the other. But what was Sir Lucius to do? He could not bid this young Ashton, as if he had been an English groom or a Highland gillie, follow with the horse and know his place. There was something of quiet dignity about Hugh's bearing which forbade aristocratic insolence to be pushed beyond a certain point, where he was concerned. And he would not take a hint. Many a man in his position would have reddened and stammered, and said 'Good-morning' sheepishly, unable to face the baronet's haughty assumption of nonchalant superiority. But Hugh, though perfectly civil, was distressingly cool, to outward appearance at least, though in reality he chafed indignantly at

the persistent hostility which Sir Lucius manifested towards him. Perhaps Maud, with a woman's quick instinct of perception, recognised this, for she was very gracious to Hugh during the walk, and when the Court was reached, gave Lady Larpent a glowing account of her own alarm and of Hugh's welcome arrival to the rescue.

At Llosthuel Court, Hugh Ashton became again painfully aware of the subtle distinctions which a difference in rank creates. Out of doors, his social inferiority to Sir Lucius was not so marked as when, on entering the mansion, he was left standing by himself in the hall, while Maud and the baronet passed on towards Lady Larpent's favourite drawing-room. It is true that Miss Stanhope turned towards him, and said kindly, that she would herself inform her aunt of his presence; but the fact remained, and Hugh stood there alone.

'I was a poor fisherman but yesterday,' he thought to himself half-bitterly. 'I am little better now, and have nothing to complain of. It was I who forgot.'

Presently a servant came to usher him into a snug little study in which the Dowager gave audience to visitors of humble degree.

'Lady Larpent told me to say she will see you directly,' said the man.

Lady Larpent did not keep Hugh waiting for her very long. She sailed in, and was very good to him and very gracious, thanking him for the recent service he had rendered to Maud, and receiving with royal affability the expressions of his gratitude for his appointment to command the *Western Maid*. With respect to her niece's recent adventure she was not so bland.

'It is unendurable,' she said, knitting her strong brows, 'that a lady staying in my house, and my relative, should be terrified and threatened within a few hundred yards of my gate. I shall send for the superintendent of police down at Treport there, and have the matter attended to at once.'

'I think, Lady Larpent, that the woman who stopped Miss Stanhope will prove to be insane,' said Hugh.

'Mad or not,' rejoined the Dowager, 'I am determined to prevent such conduct from being repeated in the future. My son, Sir Lucius, is very indignant also at the occurrence.'

Then cake and wine were brought, and Lady Larpent insisted that Hugh should partake of both, and spoke cheerily to him as to his prospects, addressing him as 'Captain' Ashton, and assuring him how glad she should always be to hear of his prosperity. And then Hugh took his leave, not having the opportunity of again exchanging a word or look with Maud.

'It would have been fitter,' said Sir Lucius, who, lounging beside a bay-window, saw Hugh's receding figure disappear in the distance, 'if that confounded fisherman had come in at the back-door.'

'You forget,' said Maud reproachfully, 'the circumstances under which he accompanied us here, and what a debt we owe him.'

And the Dowager coming in at that moment, Sir Lucius postponed any disparaging remarks concerning Hugh Ashton till another occasion. Meanwhile Hugh himself, as he strode down the winding road, was moody and deep in thought.

'Mr George!' he muttered to himself. 'I could

not mistake the words. The name, it is true, is no uncommon one—and yet! I must find that old gipsy, wherever she may hide herself, and learn what her words meant.'

(To be continued.)

WITHIN AN ACE OF DEATH.

WE propose to offer to our readers a few instances of hair-breadth escapes, by which various human beings have been saved from death.

Colonel Gilmor relating the story of a fight in which he figured, says in his *Four Years in the Saddle*: 'Turning half-round in my saddle to call on my men, I received a sudden shock and felt deadly sick, and at the same instant saw a man trail his gun and run off. I killed him before he had gone three steps. His ball had passed through two coats and stuck in a pack of cards in my left-side pocket. They were quite new, the wrapper not even having been broken open. The suits were each distinct. The bullet passed through all, stopping at the last card, which was the ace of spades.'

Such another literal illustration of the phrase 'Within an ace of death' is not upon record; but hair-breadth escapes are common in war. At the battle of Laon, Steffens saw a shell strike the horse of a Prussian officer. Entering near the shoulder, it caused the poor animal to make a convulsive spring and throw its rider; the fragments of the shell being projected on all sides, while the rider jumped up from the ground unhurt.—During the Crimean war, Colonel Wyndham, despatched to find out how matters were going in the first attack on the Redan, saw a soldier walking along the trench two or three yards ahead of him. Presently, a round-shot came flying over the parapet, and the man was hidden from sight by the dust. When it subsided, the colonel was astonished to find himself beside a living man, whose countenance presented a curious admixture of fright and joy, as scratching his head, he exclaimed: 'Why, dash my buttons, but that was amazing nigh!' 'Ay, ay, my boy,' responded the Colonel; 'we'd much better be digging trenches at threepence a rod in Norfolk!' To which his fellow-countyman only replied: 'What! Are yew tew from Norfolk?'

Amazingly nigh death, although in blissful ignorance of the fact, was the Confederate staff-officer marked down by a Northerner's rifle, and only saved by the officer commanding the platoon happening to recognise in him a client of the insurance office of which he was secretary; and striking up the levelled weapon with: 'Don't shoot; we've got a policy on him!'—Dr Brydon, the sole English survivor of the retreat from Cabul, during the last Afghanistan war, was quite aware of the narrowness of his escape, but never could understand how it came about. After a long and terrible ride, he was just congratulating himself upon having at last got clear of the enemy, when he found himself pursued by a solitary horseman. He had but a broken sword wherewith to defend himself, and with this he managed to intercept a cut at his head, directed with such force that it cleft through the base of his blade and left only the hilt, which the doctor hurled in his assailant's face; and the next

moment the Afghan cut through Brydon's head-piece and the magazine he had that morning placed inside it. Unarmed, half-stunned, and hopeless, he mechanically stooped to recover his fallen rein; when to his surprise and relief, his foe turned away and galloped off, leaving the Doctor to drag himself to Jelalabad.

The sword of justice is not always rightly directed, and sometimes comes near perpetrating murder. A young New-Yorker named Wells went one evening to Booth's Theatre. Taken with a fit of coughing, he left the theatre intending to go home; but after going some little distance, it came on snowing so fast that he retraced his steps. As he strode along, two men came rushing down the street, one of them dropping a gold watch and chain, which Wells picked up, and then went after the loser, running into the arms of a policeman, who marched him off to the station to explain matters. Presently a messenger arrived in hot haste, saying the thief was wanted at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Wells was taken there, and brought face to face with a man lying on a lounge, covered with blood. 'Is this the man who stabbed you?' asked the officer. 'It is,' said the poor fellow, falling back, never to speak again. Wells was tried for the murder, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged; and hanged he would have been, if a fortnight before the day fixed for his execution, a prisoner in Sing-Sing had not confessed on his death-bed that he had robbed the man of his watch, then stabbed him and run off, afterwards dropping the watch as he ran.

Among the Communists tried at Versailles was Jean Baptiste Pigerre, charged with commanding the firing-party who shot the hostages at La Roquette. He protested he knew nothing of the dreadful business, and was not aware that the hostages had been shot until after his arrest. His denial went for naught. He had been denounced by members of his own party; three of them on trial with him declared he was at La Roquette. M. Cherrien, a prisoner there at the time, said he saw Pigerre from his cell dressed as a National Guard, trailing a scabbard after him; his face was fixed in his memory; and Soisson, a police-officer, asserted emphatically: 'That's the man.' Only one voice was raised in Pigerre's behalf, that of the Communist judge Genton. 'You can shoot me if you like,' exclaimed he; 'but Pigerre is innocent; he had nothing to do with it.' The prosecutor summed up, insisting upon Pigerre's conviction with the rest; the advocates for the accused said their ineffectual say; and then came an interruption. A man named Jarraud, whom everybody agreed was implicated in the murder of the hostages, and who was supposed to have been killed by the soldiers, was brought into court. Pigerre was ordered to stand forward. 'That's not the man who commanded,' said Jarraud. 'O no; the leader of the band was Sicard.' The proceedings were suspended, and that same evening Sicard was found in one of the prisons. It was evident he had not long to live; but they carried him to Versailles, to testify Pigerre's innocence, and convince all the witnesses, save the three Communists, that they had been misled by the extraordinary resemblance between the two men. The prosecutor at once demanded that the accusation he had formulated against Pigerre should be

withdrawn; and so terminated what might have proved a fatal case of mistaken identity.

Yet more singular was the escape of a young Shropshire lady from an ignominious death. Staying in Paris during the Reign of Terror, she was dragged with other unfortunate 'aristocrats' before one of the tribunals. She pleaded that she was an Englishwoman; but was on the point of being hurried out to the waiting tumbril, when one of the judges asked her what province in England she was a native of. In her fright she exclaimed 'Salop,' a reply greeted by a general shout and clapping of hands, followed by an order to let her go; and amid cries of 'Salope! Salope!' the dazed girl was hustled into the street, to run home, wondering that her head was still on her shoulders, little thinking that by uttering the word 'Salop,' she had effectually rebutted the notion of her being one of the hated aristocrats, thanks to 'Salope' being a word then used to designate one of the most depraved of her sex.

Another remarkable escape of that terrible time was that of M. de Châteaubrun, for he was not only condemned, but actually waited his turn at the guillotine, standing sixteenth in a line of twenty. The fifteenth head had fallen, when the machine got out of order, and the five had to wait until it was repaired. The crowd pressed forward to see what was going on; and as it began to grow dark M. de Châteaubrun found himself gradually thrust into the rear of the spectators; so he wisely slipped away, and meeting a man simple enough or charitable enough to take his word that a wag had tied his hands and run off with his hat, had his hands set free, and managed to reach a safe hiding-place. A few days later he put himself beyond the reach of the executioner.

Major Duncan vouches for the truth of the following tale. In 1837, the Christino general Escalera was murdered at Miranda by the mutineering regiment of Segovia. About two months later, Espartero and his army arrived at Miranda; and on the 30th of October, the whole force was paraded outside the town, the regiment of Segovia being flanked by artillery and other regiments. Accompanied by his staff, Espartero rode up to it, and told the men he had come to ask for his old friend and commander, their chief Escalera. 'Where is he?' he cried. Then pointing to the dead commander's resting-place, went on: 'He is there, foully murdered! I call upon all of you who are true soldiers to give up the names of his assassins.' Twice he made the appeal, and silence was the only answer. Espartero then ordered the regiment to be numbered off from the right, and every twentieth man to be brought to the front and be prepared for immediate execution. At this a sergeant stepped forward and named ten men as the actual murderers of Escalera. These were marched off and placed in a line with their backs to a broken wall, one only protesting his innocence as he was dragged to the end of the line. Before the fatal volley was fired, he darted nimbly round the corner of the wall and ran along the front of the troops; but was recaptured, and taken back to his allotted place. A voice from the ranks cried out that they had the wrong man, the real criminal being a soldier of the same name in hospital at Burgos. Espartero ordered the man to be removed, while the rest received their deserts.

Upon inquiry being made at Burgos, the guilty one was found there, taken from the hospital and shot, his namesake of course being set free.

A snake once prevented a thief committing something worse than theft. A woman of Oude and her daughter once alighted at the station at Hurdul, and hired a conveyance to take them to their village. When they had gone half-a-dozen miles on their way, the driver pulling up in a lonely spot, demanded their jewellery; and upon their demurring, tied the pair to the vehicle and seized the trinkets. Then bethinking himself that dead women could tell no tales, the ruffian drew out his knife; but slipping from his grasp, it fell into a ditch. He plunged his hand in the water to recover the knife; and as he clutched it, a black snake fixed its fangs in the would-be murderer's hand. He succumbed to the poison, and in ten minutes was past hurting anybody. The women were discovered by some villagers, and released; but the corpse of the driver was left alone until the police coming on the scene, removed the body to the police station.

Of all the wonderful cañons or gorges of Colorado, the Grand Cañon of the Arkansas, with almost perpendicular walls, in some places several thousand feet high, is the most wonderful. The gorge of this cañon used to be impassable except in winter, until railway operations were commenced and paths of a sort cut in the sides of the precipices. Wishing to see how the said operations were progressing, Professor Mallet and a party of friends set out one afternoon from Cañon City. As long as they kept to the horse-trail, all went well; but upon reaching a point just beyond it, Mrs Mallet's horse stumbled and fell. The lady contrived to disentangle herself from the animal, and dropping some ten feet, caught with her fingers the end of a narrow shelf of rock, and there held on, dangling in air above the rapid rolling Arkansas; and to make matters worse, the horse, following its mistress, had fallen or slipped on the same ledge, where it stood close to the wall and almost as motionless as the rock itself. The horrified party hastened to the rescue; and the Professor, after some anxious minutes, had his wife safe and sound by his side. To help the horse was a more difficult matter; and an hour elapsed before men and ropes could be got from the nearest camp; and all that time the poor creature, seemingly aware that he was not to be left to his own resources, stood quietly on the narrow shelf, hardly appearing to draw breath; nor did he attempt to use his limbs until he found himself upon the sure footing of the pathway above.

On the 14th of October 1877, Miss Lizzie Wise made her twentieth balloon ascent at St Louis. She had no companion, and soon after starting found it advisable to throw out ballast. The balloon shot up half a mile, but only to descend as quickly again; and the aeronaut determined to make a dart for earth. 'Now,' says she, 'came the most trying of all my balloon experiences. I could not see a thing on earth, and the balloon made fearful plunges through the woods, crashing and cracking the limbs of the trees as it went along. All of a sudden I was lifted up several feet above the tree-tops, but only to plunge down more suddenly between the tall trees, where the balloon became hedged in, and I partly made

up my mind to have a night's lodging there. In another moment I heard voices, and called out for help, to which came the pleasant response: "Where are you?" I cried: "Up here in the tree-top; help me down, please!" Mr Sheva asked how he should do it; and I threw him a rope, and he pulled and pulled, but could not get the balloon low enough. My car was now partly bottom up, when he bade me slide down into his arms. He was big and strong. I slid down head foremost into his arms, and thus reached the earth unhurt.

Astonished as the deliverer of the distressed damsel must have been at coming upon a lady up a tree, his surprise was not greater than that of the wheel-examiner at Rugby when he saw a man's leg protruding from under one of the carriages of an express train, and found that it belonged to a sailor coiled round the break-rod, who had adopted that risky mode of travelling for want of the wherewithal to pay his fare; and was quite uninjured, after a journey from Euston, a distance of eighty-two miles, accomplished in a couple of hours; although when the engine while at full speed took in water from the between-rails tank, there were only six inches between him and the trough—a striking example of the fool-hardiness of Jack. Not but what railway servants are just as reckless as sailors, putting their limbs and lives in jeopardy without the slightest necessity, and so swelling the tale of railway disaster; for they are not always so lucky as the Ettingshall signalman who, attempting to cross the line in front of the 'Flying Scotman,' was caught by the buffer of the engine and sent whirling over the embankment—nearly twenty yards deep—to come down on his feet unharmed.

MINOR PLUNDERINGS À LA MODE.

PLUNDERING à la Mode, that is to say by fraud and ingenious methods of cheating, is not confined to those grand schemes now agitating the financial world. The higher-class rogues have imitators on a comparatively humble scale, who make a regular business of preying on the community. Every one must know this who peruses the metropolitan police reports. We offer a few examples.

Perhaps the most despicable and easily executed of the multifarious petty rogueries consists in advertising that 'Any person of either sex can obtain readily without previous knowledge from two pounds to three pounds per week;' all that is required being an advance of a certain sum, usually five pounds, which may be forwarded with name and address to A. B. at a particular place named. The whole thing is a trick; but it is astonishing how often it succeeds. We have known at least a dozen instances of poor deluded individuals sending the last remnant of their little property to the writers of these fraudulent advertisements. Sometimes the swindler asks only six postage-stamps in requital for his information as to how two pounds a week can be realised. In such cases, hundreds of letters from all parts of the country pour in, each laden with six stamps, which are good for sixpence; and the unfortunate individuals who send them never hear any more about it. They have been cheated, and are wholly without recourse. Not an uncommon device consists in advertising 'An infallible cure for sea-sickness. Any person using the remedy

can never suffer from that distressing malady. Recipe sent by inclosing two postage-stamps and a stamped envelope.' The reply is: 'Don't go to sea.'

Advertisements of 'Partners Wanted' often emanate from the clever rogues. We saw a young man the other day who was just taking a passage for the Cape of Good Hope, trusting, as he told us, either to find a fortune or death at the Diamond Fields. For seven years he had saved the greater portion of his salary as a conveying clerk; a relative died and left him a small amount of money; and altogether he found himself in possession of one thousand pounds. Lawyer though he was, a clever rogue got hold of him through one of these advertisements of partnership; and with the promise of twenty-five per cent. per annum, besides a certain amount for services, he invested his money, and became the junior in a firm of wine-merchants. Within three weeks the senior partners disappeared, and the poor dupe was ruined. Instances of this kind constantly appear in London; and it is very difficult for the most sharp-witted man to distinguish the true from the false advertisements of this character.

Another mode of swindling is carried on by advertising for confidential clerks or cashiers to perform trustworthy duties; and on the applicant seeing the advertiser, he is told that two hundred, three hundred, or perhaps five hundred pounds are required as a deposit for his trustworthiness. Sometimes the sum demanded will be only fifty or twenty pounds, according to the advertiser's idea of the applicant's means. A good salary is promised; and when the deposit is paid, the young man is installed in offices with very trifling duties at first, and none to follow; his employer is always absent, and eventually the rooms are taken possession of by the landlord. The clever rogue, after swindling two or three young men in this way in the City, probably goes to the West End to carry on further operations of a similar nature. Now it cannot be too well known by young men of good character that there is a Guarantee Society who will become responsible for them to any amount required for a small annual payment; and large firms prefer such security to that of private individuals; for in case of any default, the young men are prosecuted by the Society, and the trouble and expense taken out of the hands of the employer.

In speaking of the clever rogues in London we do not enumerate the ordinary pickpockets, whose avocations have ever been the same; waiting for a crowd, when one more expert than the rest is allowed to operate while his confederates cover his actions. The police are pretty vigilant in looking after these gentlemen, and wherever there is a great crush, placards are stuck up reminding the people to take care of their pockets. The clever rogues are mostly to be found around the banks, the Stock Exchange, in the better-class refreshment-rooms, picking up information which, if not useful at the moment, may guide them upon a future occasion. They are more active than the secret police; they often know when any one is about to receive a large amount of money, and their best chance of obtaining it. A short time ago an old gentleman went into a London bank to cash a cheque for eight hundred and fifty pounds. He took the greater portion of it in Bank of England

notes, which he counted and put under his left arm, and set himself deliberately to count the gold. Finding this all right, he looked for the notes. They were gone. Some one had come slyly behind him, and withdrawn the notes. The old gentleman doubted his senses; searched his pockets, lest he might have put them there unawares; then he hurriedly told the clerk of his loss. The numbers of the notes had been preserved, and a fleet messenger was despatched to the Bank of England to stop them. When he arrived there, he was told they were all cashed in gold three minutes ago.

Another case may be given. A gentleman of great experience in the commercial world cashed a cheque at a London bank for eleven hundred pounds, taking the whole in one-hundred-pound notes. He was only a few yards from the bank when a person resembling a clerk, bareheaded and with a pen behind his ear, touched him on the shoulder, saying: 'Beg your pardon sir; will you allow me just to take the number of these notes again? I won't keep you a minute.' The gentleman, taken off his guard, handed the notes over to the supposed clerk, whom he followed into the bank. After giving the former time to reach the top end and return, he met the gentleman at the door, saying: 'Please walk this way; that gentleman will attend to you in a minute;' pointing to a clerk who was deeply engaged. Five minutes elapsed before the gentleman could draw the clerk's attention to his case; and he was thunder-struck to find that this official knew nothing about it. The other clerks were interrogated, and they were equally in the dark. Of course no time was lost in going to the Bank of England; but too late; the clever rogue had been before them, and obtained gold for the notes.

A case of almost a similar character must be given, to shew that the clever rogue does not work without accomplices. A gentleman was paying in a large sum of money into a bank at the West End of London, when a hundred-pound note was suddenly missed. In a moment a cab was called, and the number transmitted to the Bank of England. In a few minutes the note was presented, and the gold paid; and as is usual with the Bank authorities, the person was followed and given in charge; but to the surprise of all, the hundred sovereigns had disappeared. How the rogue managed to obtain access to his accomplice without being detected in transmitting the money, is a mystery, but it was done. The man did not get free however, for the handwriting on the note was proved to be his; and as he had given a false name and address, he was prosecuted, and London was free of him for a time.

The great Dimsdale frauds, which consisted of fabricating false title-deeds, have been described in these pages. We question whether any of these fraudulent transactions equalled the following in audacity. It reminds us of the tricks in 'Gil Blas.' A gentleman was going abroad for twelve months, and he desired to let his house ready furnished for that period. The ground-rent was forty pounds per annum, but the rateable value was two hundred and forty, and the gentleman held a lease for twenty-seven years unexpired. On his way from the club one night he met a military-looking man, who gave the name of an officer in the Army List, and assumed a knowledge of this gentleman's

family, making inquiries about relatives, with whom he declared he was well acquainted. Of course this naturally led to a revisit to the club, and the pseudo-officer was introduced by the gentleman, and a social evening spent. The next day this new friend called at the gentleman's house, and upon his saying that he required a furnished residence for himself and his family, what could be more satisfactory than that he should have that of his friend's friend. The bargain was soon made, and the gentleman thought himself particularly cautious when he demanded two hundred pounds for a quarter's rent in advance; which he obtained, and the privilege of leaving the old butler and housekeeper in the house to look after his property and attend to the new tenant. Scarcely had the gentleman quitted the English shores when the pretended officer went to a celebrated house-agent and announced himself as the lease-holder, assuming the name of the gentleman from whom he rented the house. He said he wanted to sell the lease together with the household furniture; and he actually obtained six thousand five hundred for it, and decamped with the money. Of course when the next tenant came to take possession, the butler telegraphed for his master, and it was found that the deeds were forged.

One could hardly expect that anything like *Plundering à la Mode* could have been developed in connection with the business of carriage-building. Yet, such we are assured was the case. It occurred some years ago. A certain builder of carriages made a practice of keeping a carriage on hand to palm off on the executors of deceased noblemen. It was a costly vehicle, handsomely fitted up. As soon as the death of a nobleman occurred, the carriage was decorated with the arms of the deceased in the best style of herald-painting. With this preparation, a letter was despatched to the executors respectfully inquiring when it would be convenient to remove the carriage which had been built according to the orders of his lordship. It had been some time ready to be taken away, and the price was one hundred and ninety pounds, or some such sum. This unpleasant announcement usually led to a compromise. The carriage not being wanted, a sum of money was paid by the executors to take it off their hands. This was precisely what was anticipated. The carriage was now ready for a fresh start in plundering. The armorial bearings were obliterated; and the panels were prepared to receive the heraldic blazonry of the next nobleman on whose executors the same trick could be played off. Very clever this; but like all rogueries, it was at length found out, and a loss of reputation ensued. What became of the carriage that had undergone so many transformations, we know not.

A remarkable matter, which will possibly be the groundwork of a lengthened trial, shews how the clever rogues are always on the alert. An old gentleman was very near to death; he was desirous of leaving his worldly affairs in such a straightforward manner that his executors should have no trouble. He had his nieces around him, the daughters of a sister; but his brother had settled in the West Indies, and died there, leaving two sons; and the old man thought it his duty, as he had no children of his own, to divide his property equally between his nephews and nieces. To the surprise of the family, a telegram was received from

Southampton stating that the eldest nephew had arrived at that port and would be in London next day. This was an unhopd-for event, and it gave the old man great pleasure. The nephew arrived, and was gladly welcomed; the nieces greeted him with affection as their cousin. His knowledge of the family was quite sufficient to satisfy them of his individuality. The uncle sent for his lawyer, made a new will, and appointed his nephew sole executor. A month afterwards, the old man died, and the nephew was excessively anxious to have the will proved at an early date and the estate realised. He paid the nieces their legacies; his brother's and his own he was supposed to take back with him to the West Indies. Some months afterwards letters were received from the *bond fide* nephews proving that they had not so much as heard of their uncle's death, much less received the legacies. There must have been more than one clever rogue in that adventure; but how the false nephew obtained information enough to satisfy every one concerned and make good his claim to the property, is a mystery.

It cannot be too widely known that roguery in the guise of elegant manners prevails in some of the best circles in the metropolis. Rascals on the outlook for dupes are found in the clubs, at the bar, in the messroom, at social parties, in the railway train, on board the steamboat, at the opera—yea, everywhere in London life where there is an opportunity of gaining money and sacrificing the unfortunate victim. The clever rogues are not now confined to the uneducated. Men with university training and aristocratic associations prowl about like wild beasts seeking whom they can devour, and are ever on the alert to capture the innocent and beguile them as serpents would their prey. That such a state of things should exist is certainly very melancholy. The only explanation that can be offered is, that vast hordes of young men with loose and extravagant habits, who despise all regular means of industry, betake themselves to schemes of villainy in order to maintain appearances. And it is sorrowful to think how the low type of morality which has been latterly developed in respectable circles, has spread like a canker through various conditions of society. A costly style of living at whatever sacrifice of principle, is undoubtedly at the basis of all the sorts of plundering we have specified. Very despicable! But to repeat an expressive phrase employed by one of Walter Scott's characters, 'meanness is the natural companion of profligacy.'

EXPERIENCES OF A BOW-STREET RUNNER.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

ONE of my journeys called me away to a town in Suffolk, where I was ordered to take charge of a prisoner to be discharged the next day from one of the local jails, in which he had been undergoing a year's imprisonment for a criminal assault. The man had been let out on a ticket-of-leave from the *Defence* hulk at Woolwich, and had speedily, as it appeared, got into trouble down in the country. As he was merely 'wanted' to complete his original sentence—having broken his

ticket-of-leave—there could be no bother about apprehending him inside the prison, and using such precautions for his safe keeping as seemed best to my judgment.

Just as I was about to leave the office in Bow Street, one of my comrades with whom I was rather intimate came in, having finished a journey such as I was myself about to set off on. 'Going out, Tom?' he asked; and on my telling him where I was bound for, he continued: 'Better have this "barker," Tom; you may find it useful.' At the same time he produced a small pocket-pistol, which he held out for my acceptance. 'I have not got any powder,' he added; 'but here are some caps and bullets.' It seems needless to remark that this was before the days of revolvers and patent cartridges; we had then to load in the old fashion, and had merely got as far as the introduction of the percussion cap. I had never before carried anything more deadly by way of protection than a life-preserver; but as my friend seemed to mean a kindness, I made no ado about accepting his offer; and having 'capped' the pistol there and then, I consigned it to the side-pocket of a pilot-coat, which I wore buttoned over my uniform.

My journey down to Suffolk calls for no particular notice. In due time the railway deposited me at my destination, and left me with ample leisure to call upon the governor of the prison over-night, with a view to arranging for my carrying off my charge the next morning. I asked what sort of a customer I would have to deal with, and must confess I did not feel much encouraged by the reply.

'He is what I would call a nasty customer,' was the answer. 'He has given us a deal of trouble while we have had charge of him; continually breaking prison rules, and more than once he has tried to commit suicide in the most determined manner by tearing open the veins in his arms with his finger-nails.'

This account of matters was not, as may well be supposed, at all enlivening; and when the governor added that the man was a perfect giant, and had been a 'navvy' before he fell into evil courses, I began to fear that my work was cut out for me. However, there was no help for it. We Bow-Street Runners had as fickle customers to deal with as any of your modern Detectives. All I could do was to ask that the prisoner should be detained until I got over in the morning. I told the governor where I had put up; but he did not seem disposed to offer me his company for an hour or two in the evening, and to me he hardly appeared the sort of man I could ask in an off-hand way to take a friendly glass; so my arrangements being thus far completed, I there and then left him.

The inn where I had taken up my quarters stood right opposite the jail entrance, and as the street was somewhat of the narrowest, the most complete view of all comers and goers could be

commanded from the front of my temporary residence. As my landlady knew the errand I had come on, and had a most becoming respect for the representative of the law, she kindly accommodated me with her own private parlour as a sitting-room; and a very pleasant evening I spent in the company of the intelligent daughter of the house, business leaving her mother but little time to bestow upon me. Next morning found me seated at a very comfortable breakfast, and the weather being fine, the window of the private parlour was open, affording a perfect view of all that might take place at the prison door opposite. While I was absorbed in the good cheer before me, I was startled by an exclamation from both the landlady and her daughter, which caused me to look up and instinctively to glance across the street.

'Did you ever see such a big, coarse, and clumsy-looking woman?' exclaimed the younger of my entertainers.

'Or is it a woman at all?' added her mother.

My attention was at once riveted upon the newcomer, whom I somehow could not avoid connecting with the criminal it would so soon become my duty to apprehend. Without saying a word to the two ladies, I carefully and closely watched every movement of the party opposite during the remainder of my morning meal. More than once I caught myself mentally repeating my landlady's query: 'Is it a woman after all?' The *it* must be excused, as the point was so entirely doubtful. For a woman, the individual was very considerably above the average height, and her whole physique indicated far more than the average strength of womankind. There was a swagger in her walk too, most unlike the carriage of a female; and once during her pacing in front of the jail door she stopped to adjust a boot-lace or some such matter in a fashion which shewed an entire absence of delicacy, and at the same time shewed a portion of a limb which might have done credit to an athlete in the highest state of training. I was fairly puzzled, and none the less so that I had twice noticed her ringing the prison bell, and that I knew there was but one individual to be discharged that morning, and that it was close upon my time to go and look after him. I had barely finished my last cup of coffee, when one of the prison warders came across to say that the wife of my prisoner was waiting outside, and had twice made a demand to see him; but that the governor did not care to accede to the request without first consulting me. After casting the matter over in my own mind for a minute, I told the warder that I did not mind the woman being admitted, but that the two ought to be very closely watched during the interview. The man re-entered the prison, and within a few minutes I observed that the woman was called in.

Punctual to my time, I crossed over to the prison, and found my charge waiting for me, his wife being still with him, and no one in the room but the governor. Contrary to my expectations, the prisoner held up his wrists and submitted to be handcuffed with the most lamb-like docility.

When we got out into the street, I suggested, as there was time to spare, that the stalwart pair should have a bit of breakfast at my expense, before starting on the journey for town. I thought the woman seemed a little taken aback at my invitation; however, it was acceded to; and we entered the inn parlour, where I requested the landlady to produce a plentiful supply of ham and eggs; and as the pair preferred ale to tea or coffee, I ordered them a pint apiece. I had of course to unlock one hand in order to allow my prisoner the free use of his knife and fork; and after what I had heard the night before, I thought it was rather a risky thing for me to do, as though he might not attempt to do me any mischief, it was just possible he might try to inflict some serious mischief on himself. All however, passed off safely; and when breakfast was finished, I told him he must bid his wife good-bye, as I did not want to attract any attention at the railway station. A kiss was accordingly exchanged, the bracelets were again adjusted to his wrists, and we set off at a brisk pace.

When we got to the station, I learned that the next 'up' train was an express, and that I would have to look sharp, as it might be expected immediately, and made but a brief stoppage. The train in fact came in almost to a minute after the information was communicated to me; and I hurried across the platform, got my man into a second-class carriage—the compartment I had only just time to notice was empty. The whistle sounded, and the train was beginning to move, when the door was flung violently open, and in jumped the prisoner's wife, taking her seat right opposite me. There was but time for the porter to slam the door when we were off. It need not be said that I was very far from being satisfied with the look of things, and that I had made up my mind to be carefully on my guard. I said nothing, being fully determined not to betray any uneasiness, though it must be owned I felt much. Before we had gone any great way, my prisoner turned sideways to me and said: 'Master, my missus and me have some small matters of our own we would like to talk over; and as they don't concern you in the least, p'raps you wouldn't mind looking out o' winder for a minute or two while we have our talk.'

'That I could not possibly do,' was my immediate answer. 'My duty is to keep you always under my eye and control; and besides, as you have just said, your domestic arrangements can be a matter of no concern to me, so you can discuss them as freely as you please without minding my presence.'

This answer seemed to disconcert both of them; but as if by way of compromise, I at the same time leant towards the window of the carriage for a moment, and glanced outside. My hearing is sharp enough now, but at the time I speak of was even more acute. Just as I turned my head, I heard, or fancied I heard, the man whisper the words: 'Both together.' Instantly the suspicion flashed across my mind that these words related to myself, and I turned round and faced the couple in a moment. What I saw in the expression of each of them seemed to warrant my acting with immediate decision. I seized the man between his manacled wrists so that he could not raise his hands. With an instinctive thought, I plunged

my right hand into the pocket of my pilot-coat, pulled out the pistol my mate had handed to me, cocked it with my thumb, and holding it within a few inches of the face of the woman opposite, I looked steadily into her eyes, and said with emphasis: 'If you attempt to stir before we reach the next station, you will certainly be a dead woman!'

It was something fearful to notice the immediate change on that woman's countenance. She became of a pallid whiteness, and her lips had the purple-bluish tinge that indicates so unmistakably an access of deadly fear. In the highly dramatic positions I have just described we sped on until the next stopping station was reached, and that occupied fully more than twenty minutes. The moment the train came to a stop, I thus addressed the woman, keeping her 'covered' with the muzzle of my pistol: 'Leave the carriage; and if you value your liberty, make what speed you can to get into hiding.'

She disappeared instant; and I felt a heavy load of anxiety lifted off my mind as she left us, for of all the encounters I most hate, an encounter with a woman is to be classed foremost. From the moment I saw the change in her face indicative of such intense fear, I knew I was master of the situation; but still I was glad to be rid of all further risk of a struggle. Not a word passed between my prisoner and me during the remainder of the journey to London, which we were no great while in reaching, and where I duly delivered him into safe keeping at Bow Street police-office.

Next morning I had to conduct my prisoner to Woolwich, there to deliver him to the authorities of the hulks, from whom he had obtained his ticket-of-leave. He seemed to have recovered from his scare of the day before, and on our journey spoke freely enough, and with an earnestness that left no doubt of the truth of his communication.

'Master,' said he, 'I am main glad you kept your head yesterday, and did not lean out of the winder. Had you done so, missus and I meant to have pitched you out, and taken our chances after of getting off.'

'I was not very likely to be so easily put off my guard,' was my laconic answer.

'Ay, but master, your danger was not over then; for missus and I had made it up that she was to pin your arms—and she could a done it easy—while I was to smash your head with the "darbies." We should then a took the key, got off the bracelets, and heaved you out a winder, afore you could come to yourself. That pistol fairly put us out, for it cowed missus, and she isn't easily cowed, I tell ye.'

'But the pistol was not loaded,' said I—'nothing but a cap and an empty barrel.'

'All the same master I'm main glad we failed. Now I've thought it over, I know I could not have escaped. It was known I left in your charge, and that missus joined us. When your body was found, we'd a been spotted at once, and most likely both on us would a swung for it. I'm main glad, I tell you, that you got out o' the mess, and I don't bear you no ill-will for having done your dooty as a man and a hoffer.'

Never before, to my knowledge, had I been in such deadly peril, and truly thankful did I inwardly feel for the providential escape I learned

I had just made. I was glad to hand my murderous-minded charge over to the care of the officers of the *Defence*; and I am thankful to add that I never heard more of him, or wished to do so.

THE MONTH. SCIENCE AND ARTS.

COLLECTORS of fossils, especially of fossil plants, have often had to deplore the destruction of specimens by hammering them from the rocks in which they were imbedded, or in splitting fragments of stone in hope of discovery. Destruction and disappointment are now obviated by a process described by Baron Ettingshausen, an eminent Austrian phytopalæontologist, in a Report on phytopalæontological investigations read before the Royal Society. The process is simple: the lumps of stone supposed to contain the fossil leaves and stems are soaked for say six months in water under a pressure of from two to three atmospheres. Wherever a fossil is imbedded, the substance of the stone is not continuous, however compact it may be, and these microscopic interstices become filled with water under the soaking and the pressure. The lumps of stone are then taken out and exposed to intense cold; the thin films of water freeze; the stones open of themselves, and expose their long-buried contents uninjured. In some instances the soaking and freezing have to be repeated; but the trouble is repaid by the fact that the more compact the stone, the less imperfect will be the fossil, as was demonstrated by specimens exhibited at the reading of the Report.

In the manufacture of alum there used formerly to be great loss by evaporation from the open pans in which the liquid under treatment was kept just below the boiling-point. Eventually this loss was prevented by covering the liquid with a thin layer of coal-tar; the consumption of fuel was in consequence diminished. 'This simple though important technical application,' says Dr Frankland, 'suggested to me a condition of things under which the existence of so-called "dry fog" would be possible. From our manufactories and domestic fires, vast aggregate quantities of coal-tar and paraffin oil are daily distilled into the atmosphere, and, condensing upon, or attaching themselves to, the watery spherules of fog or cloud, must of necessity coat these latter with an oily film, which would in all probability retard the evaporation of the water, and the consequent saturation of the interstitial air.'

This theory having been tested and verified by various experiments, Dr Frankland concludes that dry fog is accounted for, as also 'the frequency, persistency, and irritating character of those fogs which so often afflict our large towns.' Moreover, 'some of the products of destructive distillation of coal are very irritating to the respiratory organs, and to a large amount are scarcely if at all volatile at ordinary temperatures.'

The recent discussion about electric light has shewn more clearly than before the strong necessity under which operators are brought of finding some means for measuring and regulating the extremely powerful electric currents which can be produced by the dynamo-electric machine. Mr

Siemens, F.R.S., has discovered the means by which 'currents passing through a circuit, or branch circuit, are measured and graphically recorded.'

He takes advantage of the fact that when an electric current passes through a conductor, heat is generated. The conductor in this case is a very thin strip of metal, forming an important part of a complicated apparatus contrived to measure, regulate, and record the currents passing through it. One end of the thin strip touches a lever, and as the length of the strip varies with its temperature, the lever is moved accordingly, and affects the other members of the apparatus, including a pencil for the record, in a way which could not be understood without the aid of a diagram. But the movements are so ingeniously planned that the thin conducting strip never gets too hot, and consequently 'the current itself is rendered very uniform, notwithstanding considerable variation in its force, or in the resistance of the lamp, or other extraneous resistance which the strip is intended to regulate.'

Mr Siemens says further: 'It might appear at first sight that, in dealing with powerful currents, the breaking of contacts would cause serious inconvenience, in consequence of the discharge of extra current between the points of contact. But no such discharges of any importance actually take place, because the metallic continuity of the circuit is never broken, and each contact serves only to diminish to some extent the resistance of the regulating rheostat.' The papers summarised in the foregoing paragraphs are published with illustrations in the *Proceedings* of the Royal Society.

Mr Schwendler, superintendent electrician to the government of India, has during eighteen months made experiments on electric lighting at the India Stores Depot, Lambeth, and a *précis* of his interesting Report has just been published by the India Office. He recommends that the light should be adopted for railway stations in India, and is now on his way thither to carry out the work.—At Marston, in Cheshire, the experiment has been tried of lighting by electricity a rock-salt mine, including from seven to eight acres of excavations, with complete success, and contrasting advantageously in brilliancy and in cost with the old tallow-candles.

Professor Greene of Troy, state of New York, having to superintend the erection of an astronomical observatory, decided that the dome should be made of paper, with a view to avoid the heavy weight, from five to ten tons, of a dome constructed in the ordinary way, and the machinery required to revolve it. The dome in question is twenty-nine feet in diameter: paper of the best quality, one-sixth of an inch thick, was made expressly for the purpose, and fitted in sections to the wooden framework. The structure (of the paper) is described 'as compact as that of the hardest wood, which it greatly excels in strength, toughness, and freedom from any liability to fracture.' The surface is painted, and as no external nails are used, this novel roof may be expected to last many years. The total weight is about four thousand pounds, which can be revolved by hand without the use of machinery.

Needles may be used as magnets, and made to float vertically in water by attaching a speck of cork to the eye end. If, while thus floating, a large magnet is held above them, they arrange

themselves in certain definite groups, which, according to Mr A. M. Mayer (United States) exemplify molecular structure and molecular action. In some instances the groups assume an unstable form; but by movement of the upper magnet, or at times a knock on the table, they take up a stable configuration. These configurations may be recorded (if before immersion the upper ends of the needles have been touched with printer's ink) by laying upon them a piece of flat cardboard, when the place of each needle will be shewn by a dot; and by drawing a straight line from dot to dot, the representative forms become at once apparent. From the triangle, square, and pentagon, they pass into hexagons, octagons, decagons, and compose groups within groups: 'stable nuclei which may be suggestive to chemists and crystallographers.'

Professor Loomis, untiring in his meteorological investigations, has by the aid of a series of charts succeeded in identifying a number of storms, and in following thirty-six in their course across the Atlantic. Eight of them became merged with other storms on the way; hence twenty-eight only reached the coast of Europe within the time included in the discussion, March 1874 to November 1875. Nearly all of these storms, says the Professor, pursued a course north of east, and passed considerably to the north of Scotland; hence they did not exhibit much violence on the coast of England. He concludes therefore that when a centre of low barometric pressure (below twenty-nine inches) leaves the coast of the United States, the probability that it will pass over any part of England is only one in nine; the probability that it will give rise to a gale anywhere near the English coast is one in six; and the probability that it will give rise to a very fresh breeze is one in two.

A noticeable fact in regard to Atlantic storms is their slow rate of progress, due partly to the erratic course of the centre of the low area, partly to the blending of two areas into one, which pushes the most eastern centre back to the west. And further, 'there seems in the Atlantic Ocean to be a special cause which frequently holds storms nearly stationary in position from day to day, and this cause is probably the abundance of warm vapour rising from the Gulf Stream, in close proximity to the cold dry air from the neighbouring coast of North America. Hence we see that when American storms are predicted to appear upon the European coast, and it is assumed that they will cross the ocean at the same rate as they have crossed the United States, the prediction will seldom be verified.'

Professor Loomis has begun a comparison of the observations made on the top of high mountains with those made at the foot, and with the winds and weather of the adjacent country. The result cannot fail to be instructive. Ere long, similar researches may be made north of the Tweed, for the Scottish Meteorological Society are about to build an observatory on the top of Ben Nevis.

Professor Langley, of the Allegheny Observatory, is of opinion that the atmosphere of the sun is proved to be a thin stratum which cuts off one-half of the heat that would otherwise reach the earth. He calculates that if this envelope should be thickened twenty-five per cent., the mean

temperature of our globe would be reduced one hundred degrees Fahrenheit; and he suggests that such a thickening would account for the phenomena of the glacial period.

Observations on snow collected on mountains and within the arctic circle far beyond the influence of factories and smoke, confirm the supposition that minute particles of iron float in the atmosphere, and in time fall to the earth. Some physicists believe that these floating particles of iron are concerned in the striking phenomena of the aurora. Gronemann of Göttingen holds that streams of the particles revolve round the sun, and that when passing the earth they are attracted to the poles, and thence stretch forth as long filaments into space. But as they travel with planetary velocity, they become ignited in our atmosphere, and thus produce the luminous appearances or aurora. In his recent voyages, Professor Nordenskiöld examined snow far in the north beyond Spitzbergen, and found therein exceedingly small particles of metallic iron, phosphorus, cobalt, and fragments of Diatomaceæ.

From experiments made in France, it is ascertained that the amount of sugar in beet-root varies in direct proportion to the size of the leaves; in other words, the larger the leaf the more sugar. Sugar exists also in the leaves; but in small quantity except in the midrib.

The sweet substance 'nectar' found in blossoms and flowers, has been subjected to experiment by Mr Wilson, who from his results has worked out some curiously interesting calculations. For example, one hundred and twenty-five heads of clover yield approximately one gram of sugar; one hundred and twenty-five thousand heads yield one kilogram; and as each head contains about sixty florets, seven million five hundred thousand distinct flower-tubes must be sucked in order to obtain one kilo of sugar. 'Now,' continues Mr Wilson, 'as honey, roughly, may be said to contain seventy-five per cent. of sugar, we have one kilo equivalent to five million six hundred thousand flowers in round numbers, or say two-and-a-half millions of visits for one pound of honey. This shews what an amazing amount of labour the bees must perform.' A notable part of the sugar is cane-sugar, which is remarkable, for honey containing cane-sugar is looked on by dealers as adulterated. A nice question here arises as to the way in which the nectar is converted into cane-sugar while in possession of the bee. It is worthy of notice that in this country the fuchsia does not part with its nectar, in consequence of the nectary being inaccessible to native British insects.

The Geographical Society, with a view to make geography more widely known, have enlarged the size of their *Proceedings*, and filled it with accounts of travels and explorations, and reports of discovery in all parts of the globe, interesting not only to scientific geographers, but to what is called the ordinary reader. Among the contents of the new number, illustrated by maps, are the Arctic Expeditions of 1878, in which the northern coast of Asia was visited; the mountain passes of Afghanistan; and Signor D'Alberis' voyage of five hundred miles up the Fly River in New Guinea. This voyage was undertaken in the hope of collecting birds and novel objects in natural history; but it was diversified by many

adventurous incidents. New Guinea is not more than eighty miles from the northern extremity of Australia: the intervening sea-channel is shallow, and Mr D'Alberis is of opinion that the two countries will at no distant day be united, not, as he remarks, by Nature's great agencies of subterranean upheaval, but by 'the modest yet laborious and industrious operatives which are now at work. It will be the polypus and corals which will gradually unite in one those two largest islands in the world.'

The Rev. W. E. Griffis, who has been Professor at the Imperial University of Tokio, states as evidence of progress in Japan since that country joined the postal union, that the number of letters sent through the post-office in 1877 was 23,657,052, of which not more than 140,631 were for foreign countries. The post-cards were 6,764,272, and newspapers 7,372,536. Of post-offices throughout the country there are 3744, of receiving agencies 151, of stamp agencies 916, and of street letter-boxes 866. This shews that the Japanese were in earnest when they undertook to change their civilisation for that of the western world. And further, there are around the coast thirty-four lighthouses, three light-ships, sixteen buoys, and five beacons.

As announced, Captain Burton delivered his lecture to the Institute of British Architects on 'Remains of Buildings in Midian,' and stated among geographical particulars that Arz Madyan, as the country is called by natives, has a coast-line of about three hundred miles on the eastern side of the Red Sea; and that 'topographically speaking the whole tract is a prolongation of the great Hauranic Valley, of the land of Moab; of the Nejed or south country; of Idumæa, which the Hebrews called Edom, and of the classical Nabathæa, whose western capital was Petra, the Rock.' Traces still exist of an ancient road which passing eighteen cities and towns, was one of the earliest, if not the very earliest of 'overland routes' to and from India. 'Here,' says Captain Burton, 'before the Nile route to Alexandria was opened, merchants disembarked their goods, preferring the long and toilsome camel-journey to the dangerous ship-voyage northwards; and, reaching Petra, the imports were passed on to Phœnicia and Egypt.'

Building materials were abundant, stone of different kinds, alabaster, gypsum, and fireclay, and were turned to good account by the architects and builders of Midian, as is testified by the numerous ruins of houses, temples, tombs, aqueducts, and mining and smelting works. At one of the sea-side settlements the aqueduct was three miles in length; Shuwák, we are told, is a place that 'could hardly have lodged less than twenty thousand people;' and this is but a section of a once inhabited district through which can be traced 'a water-course for a total of at least four miles.'

Desolation now prevails in this once populous and busy mining country. But the copper and the lead and the gold are not yet exhausted; and it may be that modern enterprise will find scope for its energies in the ancient land of Midian.

With regard to our recent paper on Ostrich Farming, we have to state that those who desire further information may have it by applying to Mr S. Probant, 8 Brunswick Square, London.

HOW WE CAME BY OUR PET BLACKBIRD.

It is not every one who cares about keeping a pet in a cage. The idea of confining a poor little thing to a cubic foot or two was always repulsive to our feelings, and yet for some years we kept such a pet so confined. The reason we did so is simply given. One beautiful forenoon in August, some five years ago, our little dog Prin came bounding into the parlour, evidently in a state of very great excitement, and commenced pulling at my wife's dress in a manner to cause her great uneasiness, from fear that he had been seized with hydrophobia. After pulling and tugging at her, he would rush whiningly into the kitchen, and then back to the parlour, where similar action was repeated. So frightened was my wife, that after managing to get the parlour-door closed on him, she rushed out to the garden to find me, and relate the story of the sudden and strange turn which our usually sedate dog had taken. It was the Dog-days, and might not the old fellow have been struck with madness?

My wife is somewhat of an invalid, and by consequence a little nervous and easily excited; so without laying too much stress on her statement, I preceded her to the house, to see what was the matter with the dog. On my arrival, the poor old fellow (a beautiful Maltese terrier) danced with excitement, howled, whined, rushed into the kitchen, back again to the parlour, tugged at my trousers, then at my wife's dress, and in short went on at such a rate as I had never witnessed before. I was certainly very much surprised and struck at his proceedings, but was confident that none of his actions gave the slightest indication of hydrophobia, as my wife had supposed. The strangest thing was his continual bolting to the kitchen and returning. On following him into the kitchen, we found it was the cat that was engaging his attention; for poor old Puss was standing in a corner with her back highly arched, and looking as if she were determined to maintain her position at all hazards. She evidently was at a loss to understand what the row was about, and looked to us imploringly, as much as to say: 'Would you kindly put an end to this tomfoolery, and let me have my sleep in quiet?'

'Come, come Prin,' I said. 'What is all this nonsense about? Why are you annoying poor old Pussy so?'

But he was out at the kitchen-door in a moment, and making all the efforts possible for us to accompany him down to the orchard. After him we went accordingly—he bounding on before us, barking with all his might, and bounding back again, as if to encourage us to walk faster. He seemed filled with delight and anxiety as on he scampered.

'What will the old fellow be about to shew us?' we said as we followed quickly after him. 'Perhaps a rabbit-hole; but we'll see.'

On he went until he was about two hundred and fifty yards down the green ride that intersected the orchard, when he stopped, and crept slowly under a large black currant-bush, where he seemed to snuff about for a few seconds. When he reappeared, all symptoms of anxiety seemed to have disappeared, and only delight at finding the object

of his search safe seemed to possess him. He did not now come back to us with a bounding rush, but slowly and in a sort of half-dancing way, switching his erect tail, and moving his head from side to side, all the while looking to us, as if he meant: 'He's all right here—you'll be as pleased as I am presently.'

And what was the object of all this anxiety and delight? I looked into and round the bush, but for a time could see nothing. I knelt down, removing the low boughs gently; and there, sitting close by the main stems of the bush, sat a poor little blackbird, gasping and evidently in sore distress. It made no effort to get away as I reached my hand to bring it out, but even sat motionless on my palm when I raised myself up to examine it. And what a sad plight it was in, to be sure! One wing was broken, and one eye struck clean out of the socket, and hanging down close to its bill. My first thought was to strike it out of misery, as all hope of saving it seemed folly. But my wife would not hear of such a thing, and begged for a chance to save its life, on account of the interest which Prin had taken in it. She took it therefore in her hand, and the poor dog evinced the greatest pleasure possible, bounding before us all the way to the house, where the cat came in again for a good round of canine abuse.

After having given it a little water from the tube of a straw, and a little soft food administered in much the same way, the poor bird seemed wonderfully refreshed; and it was put into a basket until we saw whether it was of any use to purchase a cage. A bird-fancier in the vicinity, who was also a veterinary surgeon, called and cut the eye that was hanging clean away, and he also lopped off the broken part of the wing. In about a week after (so successfully had he been treated and tended), Mr Blackbird might have been seen seated on his perch in a brand-new wicker cage and looking as proud as Lucifer.

And a merry merry fellow poor Blackie was for many a long day after! It would be tedious to speak of his tricks; but the affection he had for old Prin, and Prin for him, was the most remarkable thing I ever noticed. He would oftentimes not touch his breakfast unless Prin sat beside him on the window-table on which his cage was placed. His delight with the old dog was boundless. But if the cat appeared on the scene he would get into a state of the greatest excitement, and actually scream with terror until Prin turned Puss out.

Poor Blackie died very suddenly one winter morning, to our great grief, and we have never had a cage-pet since. He was buried in a geranium vase in the garden.

We could never be sure as to how he came by his wounds. They certainly looked more as having been inflicted by a hawk or an owl than a cat. Yet why was Prin so guardful of Puss in the first instance, and why was the poor blackbird during all his captivity so timorous on the approach of the cat? To be sure all birds are fearful of the feline race, but long habit accustoms them in general to their presence. It was not so however with our blackbird; and the manner in which he came to his mutilated state must therefore remain a mystery.

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